The Cauldron of Europe

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AT NO time since the armistice has the ferment in Europe been so great as it is now. On the Arctic Coast, from the Baltic southward by way of the three Baltic states, Poland and the Ukraine down to the Black Sea, and in all the southern regions of Russia there is war and want and misery. The Roumanians, though messages from time to time announce that they are beginning to evacuate Hungary, are still in Budapest and have so thoroughly stripped the unhappy country that one scarce knows how it will survive in the future unless it be driven by its tortures, as the torturers intend, to secure actual union with Roumania. Roumania defies and despises the Paris Conference.

Farther to the west D'Annunzio holds triumphantly his unlawful prize at Fiume. The Italian Government is powerless to eject him, because it has no hold over the army and navy. It is well aware that if it orders the army to march against D'Annunzio, the army will disobey and is much more likely to march against the government. D'Annunzio, too, despises and defies the Paris Conference. Meanwhile the Extreme Socialists in Italy are laying their plans for a revolution. If D'Annunzio and his Imperialist friends set themselves above the established government, that, say the Socialists, is a game that two can play at, and with the rigor of a coal-less winter coming on there may be a chance for a sudden blow aimed by the revolutionary forces against the established system and the monarchical régime.

Anarchy reaches its height in the Baltic provinces. There are three governments there—the Esthonian, the Lithuanian and the Lettish—whose chief aim is to assure their own independence. They have broken away from the old Russia and they are afraid both of a revived Germany and of an Imperialistic Russia which might be set up on the ruins of the Bolshevist Government. They have all been fighting in one degree or another against the Bolshevists at the instigation of the Allies, but latterly they have begun to ask what their fate is likely to be if the protégés of the Paris Conference, Denikine and Kolchak, get to Moscow and establish themselves in power.

Well may they ask. Kolchak has refused to guarantee the independence of these Baltic states. He goes no further than to say that their fate must eventually be submitted to a constituent assembly of all Russia, while Denikine has come out boldly with a declaration for a "united and indivisible Russia" which bodes ill for the border states. Latterly, therefore, all three of the Baltic states, and Finland, too, have shown an increasing disposition to make a peace of their own with the Bolsheviki, while the aim of the Allies has been to dissuade them and to keep them at war with the Moscow Government. The Baltic states, too, it will be seen, have no high opinion of the Paris Conference. They do not believe that it has the power to impose its wishes on its Russian Allies and they are therefore disposed to shift for themselves.

Another complication arises from the presence in Lettland of Von der Goltz and his German divisions. He, too, has been defying the Peace Conference. In the first instance, the Conference, being more afraid of Bolshevism than of Germany, actually ordered Germany to keep these troops of hers in Courland, in order that they might form a barrier against an incursion by the Russian Reds. So the Germans kept them there and many volunteers were raised in Germany and went out and joined them. Then the Allies grew more afraid of Germany than of Bolshevism. They became aware that this Von der Goltz army, disciplined, well-equipped and reinforced by many volunteers, was becoming a serious danger to the Baltic states and possibly to the Socialist Government of Germany. It might be made use of by the militarists in Germany to effect a counter-revolution.

So the Allies ordered Germany to bring this army back. As it proved, Germany might order but she had little power. The German Government was itself frightened lest these troops should be used for its overthrow by the militarist leaders, who cared little for the German Government and less for the Paris Conference. In fact, Von der Goltz's men began to make war on the Letts, our Allies, and though no one can say positively what is their aim and part in the extraordinary confusion which prevails, it seems most likely that they will cast in their lot with the "White" Russians and, where they can, aid in the war against the Bolsheviki.

The one quality which is common to all these wars and brawls is the weakness, amounting almost to impotence, of the Supreme Council at Paris. Von der Goltz, Roumania, D'Annunzio—the story is everywhere the same. Each rebel learns from his predecessors and each, as he rebels with impunity, produces other rebels like himself. There will be no peace in Europe, some say, until the Council once and for all asserts itself, and this the Council does not or cannot do. The Council, say others, has now all the authority that the League of Nations can assert in its earliest stages: if it cannot even reduce the Roumanians to order, how will the League be able to carry out its will? Why is it, then, that the Supreme Council wanes and rebellion flourishes? If that could be discovered, we should at least have taken a first step toward finding a remedy.

Up to the time of the armistice the ultimate factor at the back of all diplomacy was Force. All peoples and governments recognized this and regulated their actions by the knowledge. Consciously or unconsciously, they thought in terms of ultimate Force—that is to say, of war conducted by armies and fleets. But now, over a large part of the world, Force, and the possibility of the application of Force, has almost vanished. That *ultima ratio* can no longer be appealed to. At the same time no other compelling influence has been put in its place. Only a few months ago the Paris Conference, which represents the greatest of the world's powers, would have said to a recalcitrant state (like Roumania) or a rebellious individual (like D'Annunzio): "You will do this or that by half past nine tomorrow night or we will make you." But there is no such alternative today. The Council cannot "make" the rebels do this or that. Force, as represented by the great popular armies, has largely disappeared. They have been demobilized. They will not fight. They are bone-weary of fighting. So sick are they of being made the instruments of the doctrine of Force, so weary are their peoples of the application of the doctrine, that the British troops have had to be brought away from Archangel, French troops would not fight in the Black Sea, the Italian Government had to promise to send no more munitions in Italian bottoms into Russia against the Bolsheviki.

The peoples of the Great Powers have largely abandoned Force from sheer weariness. But their governments were wholly unprepared for such a consummation. The diplomacy of the governments still depends on the same old elements. They still act as though Force were behind them. But it is not, and they have no substitute. If you abandon Force as the ultimate means of making your will prevail in the world, what is the alternative to be? The idealists put forward the conception of a League of Nations which would be inspired by certain ethical notions of the relationship of peoples. But the Allies have not up to the present succeeded in translating the League into action. There is a scheme, but it only includes a part of the civilized world and some even of that part, which has ostensibly adopted it, openly acts in violation of its principles.

This is the secret of the impotence of the Paris Supreme Council. It cannot rely on Force nor can it appeal to principles of Right freely accepted and applied by a great League of Peoples. It can apply neither violence nor the moral authority of a united public conscience to the problems of Europe. For this reason it is mistrusted or condemned or openly defied, and opportunity passes to the hands of anyone who is still disposed or has the means to apply Force. This is the key to much that is happening in Eastern Europe. There the nationalist and territorial passions of the less civilized, the more primitive, peoples have been awakened with disastrous results. They are not yet satiated with the idea of fighting, which comes easily to them as the natural means of expressing their will.

THAT is why the Roumanians today are in so strong a position. For themselves they are willing to apply the old weapon of Force and they know that in all probability they can do so with impunity, for not only are the Powers at Paris divided in counsel but—as the Roumanians calculate rightly—they are in no position to send a military expedition against Roumania; their peoples and their armies would not suffer it. The same reason has enabled Von der Goltz and still enables D'Annunzio to hold his ground against the Allies, and the chances are that Europe has by no means seen the last of such adventures and adventurers. It may well be, for instance, that the German military and monarchist clique may argue that if by force of arms they overthrow the German Republic the Allies will be unable to intervene against them by force of arms and that it would be worth their while to run the risks of the blockade.

But the main question is, how are the Allies and Associated Powers, how is the civilized world, to grapple with this state of anarchy which afflicts so much of Europe? The critics of the League of Nations are fond of pointing to the present confusion as a sign of the impotence of the League. They do not see that what is wrong is precisely that we have not too much but too little League. There is as yet no true League in spirit or in substance and the consequence is that every high-handed Power or impulsive adventurer can take an independent course, secure in the knowledge that there is no tribunal of the nations wielding a moral authority to which it must give respect, if not obedience. In Europe France is pursuing a policy of her own—a policy of the encirclement of Germany by a ring of Powers which are to preserve a balance in the French interest against a revived Germany. For that reason France was not wholeheartedly with the United States and England in the measures by which it was proposed to bring pressure on Roumania when her army occupied Budapest. Again France and England have barely been able to compose their differences over the distribution of the Turkish provinces. Germany, up to the present, is debarred from entering the League. Russia cannot enter because she is a prey to civil war. Whatever the future may bring, there is so far no genuine League of Nations. There is no immediate remedy, it is to be feared, for the distemper from which a large part of Europe is suffering. There is a fever in the blood which must work itself out. Grandiose ambitions, allied to the misery and want of peoples, make inevitably for civil and foreign war. But insofar as a partial remedy is possible, it lies still in the ideal which inspired the world with hope during the war—the realization of a sincere League of Nations. Some, with the bitter experience of the last twelve months before them, say that this is now an idle dream. They say that the Imperialistic Governments of Europe have been tried and found wanting and that it is clear now that they will not subscribe to the principles of justice and fair dealing and of respect for the rights of nationality on which Mr. Wilson sought to found the League.

But it is too soon to despair. Above all, every effort ought to be made to put the machinery of the League in operation, to make all its proceedings public, to raise popular feeling in its behalf. Those who believe in it must work for it in order that the principles of conduct on which the League is founded may be enforced on the reluctant governments. As soon as possible Germany should be admitted to the League and Russia, too, as soon as the civil war is over and a stable government emerges. The moral authority which a genuine league, sincere and reinforced by the late enemy countries, would be able to wield is the sole instrument adequate to curb the present lawlessness. Such a league would have other means of coercion than Force. They would be bold rebels who would stand up against the disapproval of the mass of Powers, both great and small, and if they were recalcitrant the public conscience could express its condemnation by cutting the offender off from intercourse with its fellows in the comity of nations.

We are still far off this stage. But we set out by wondering what might take the place of the Force to which men used to look and to which they can look with confidence no longer. They have a better and higher substitute ready to their hand. If anyone has a better plan, let him produce it, only let him not throw stones against a League of Nations. It is not the League of Nations but the lack of a true League that leads to the present evils and discontents.

Caucasus Neighbors

FROM the Caucasus mountains on the edge of Armenia comes news that Turks and Kurds are threatening Erivan.

Erivan as a name means nothing to us, perhaps. The fact that it is located in the region from which the white or Caucasian race gets its name will excite only a passing interest. But—it is a republic. Its 2,500,000 people have formed a democracy. They are appealing to the democracies of the West to help them preserve their independence.

Let the word "republic" be mentioned, and distant Erivan looks near. We do not know Erivan, but we realize that someone in the passes of the mountains has kindled a watchfire of liberty. We cannot speak the language of Erivan, but we know that the precious writings of our freedom must have been translated into that language. They have spoken not to our heads but to our hearts. There was a time when perhaps the mere republicanism of Erivan might not have stirred us. But we realize today, after the experiences of the past few years, what it is to contend for principles of liberty. The danger in which the western democracies have been makes us appreciate more keenly what perils may cloud the life of that Oriental Switzerland.

So we are glad to be neighbor to Erivan, ignoring the vain interval of seas and mountains. The liberty for which they contend against their enemies is not their liberty alone. They fight not for a republic but for a republicanism, not for their own self-rule but for the self-determination of us all. Neighbor by nearness of spirit, kindred by kinship of soul, and a comrade in the world-wide march of democracy, this is Erivan to us!

In Fairness to the Mexican

JUST so long as the public is asked to believe that the Mexican is a rascal, bandit by choice and loafer by circumstance, there will continue to be a wide and unconquerable chasm between that country and the United States.

Statistics are coldly truthful, but they are not the whole truth; they do not register in units the presence or lack of opportunity, the nature of environment, the presence or absence of leadership, and a dozen other factors in the industry and character of a people.

Hence statistics show a poor case for the Mexican, and he has never tried nor cared very much, about putting a case for himself.

Responsible men, who have studied the Mexican at first hand, have two prime feelings toward him: the first is pity for the handicaps under which he lives, and the second is optimism for his usefulness if ever he gets a chance. Some are lazy, often because they have never been shown any virtue in toil and, in the past, their toil not seldom has benefited others than themselves. Some are at times dissolute, shiftless and irresponsible, but that initial weakness has been developed largely by the way in which unscrupulous foreigners have handled them; liquor has been one of their handiest weapons.

It is suggested that a revision of the national attitude toward the Mexican will go far toward removing the irritation with which the average person regards the southern republic; he may not fulfill our generous conception of ideal citizenship, but that, at bottom, is less his fault than ours—and others who should know better.